

# WHAT WELL-DRESSED WOMEN WILL WEAR

By ANNE RITTENHOUSE

## France May Abolish Her Fashion Shows During the War

THE millions who are employed in the making of women's apparel in this country are disturbed by an important discussion that is going on among themselves. It has to do with the importation of French clothes, with the prices asked for all kinds of apparel, with the threatened abolition of the famous French semi-annual exhibitions, and with the tendency of the public to ask for American clothes.

### The Situation In France

Only a handful of buyers went to Paris for new clothes this year. That did not lessen the number of gowns bought from the French designers, however, because all the resident commissionaires were at work. But the disappointment in Paris at the lessened bulk of buying has been summed up on both continents in M. Worth's now famous phrase, "Instead of American buyers, we had American visitors this season."

And why did the Americans refuse to buy? Because the prices were beyond their limitations, for one reason; and, another, because of the fact that there was not enough striking novelty exhibited to make it worth while, and several of the houses displayed an ostentatious gaudy and barbarism in clothes that was not suitable to our mood.

The house of Callot, for instance, showed at an enormous expense three hundred and fifty gowns that were as Orientaly exotic as those worn in the Russian ballet. The designs might have been for Cleopatra in her glory.

These gowns would irritate Americans this season, and Callot should have been quite aware that they wouldn't have been worn by French women. She misjudged the American public by the extravagance that it displayed in Paris in the question of money. You may remember that this question was taken up in this department at the beginning of the winter.

The house of Premet was more subdued, although one expects it to be eccentric; and while the simple gown worn by Mme. Renée received two hundred orders the rest of the exhibition was patronized by the newly rich Parisienne and the Riviera set, not by us. It would be tedious, however, to go into the details of the great houses.

Another absurdity which Paris insisted upon was the short sleeve. She imitated the Directoire with the four-inch sleeve for afternoon, and the loose elbow sleeve for other hours of the day, and she did it at a time when, as a woman of wide information and social power wrote from Paris, gloves were almost impossible to get by even the very rich and were sold at absurdly high prices.

Again, Paris produced a stupendous amount of jet and loaded our evening, morning and afternoon gowns with it. It is too heavy for ornament for the hot American spring and summer, so few of those gowns are amply received by the buyers.

One could go on ad infinitum. Gossip, information and discussion, if repeated, would fill a page or more with interesting details of the situation as it has been thrashed out by those who have finished up the spring season in French clothes.

But all the straws of discussion lead to two supremely important points: Paris feels that she will have to abandon her exhibitions of clothes for the duration of the war, and America believes that she is capable of supplying her own fashions from now on, because the American women will encourage the work. There is no belief that Paris will discontinue the making of clothes, but there is a strong feeling that the exhibition of last February will be the last until peace is declared and commerce resumed on its normal basis.

There are two reasons for this: The enormous expense attending the arrangement of these exhibitions of gowns, which was a great loss to Paris this spring, and the frenzy connected with the effort to get workwomen. No one in Paris wants to sew or cut or fit or embroider when a thousand new industries are open to women where the wages are equal to those of a man. France would be acting only according to wisdom, therefore, if she abandoned her semi-annual exhibitions.

### What Is the Substitute?

During the French Revolution France sent out a doll with new fashions to show how women should dress, and this mannequin was copied and imitated even on the frontier lines in America.

Next summer she may send out crinolines, not hoopskirts, as the layman thinks, but gowns made of soft cambric which can be packed in tiny bundles and mailed to the American buyers. This is the best solution of the problem that has offered itself to all the merchants of the world.

These crinolines can be shown to the American women, who will order gowns from them, or they can be copied on this side in cloth and produced in great numbers. If neither of these methods is necessary, they serve as inspiration and render a verdict. This method would save millions upon millions of francs and would serve to sober and steady the apparel business. It would put it on a sensible basis and keep it within the bounds of taste and sensibility.

On the other hand, the development of American fashions is a big one. It is too big to take up at the same moment as the discussion of the abolition of French exhibitions. But the one is made possible by the other. America is beginning to have pride in her clothes and put the label "Made in America" on what is done. And, more than that—and this is the important thing—women in mass do not connive at dishonesty in insisting that they must buy a French model, thereby compelling thousands of frantic dressmakers to put dishonest labels in the belts of their skirts.



**SERVICE FROCK OF DARK BLUE SERGE**—It is buttoned down entire length of front and a blue organdy ruffle and black patent leather belt ornament it.



**BRILLIANT COLORED BODICE IS WORN WITH DIFFERENT SKIRT**—Frock of blue and white figured foulard skirt and sleeves, with a peasant's bodice of bright blue silk cut in points back and front.



**APRON TUNIC WIDENS THE SILHOUETTE**—The sketch shows a gown of black satin, with tight skirt and pointed apron lined with white. The slim bodice is of white Georgette crepe embroidered with bands of jet beads.



**A SUMMER HAT OF TAFFETA RUFFLES**—This eighteenth-century shape is made in rose pink, pale yellow and blue. There is a ribbon around the base of the crown, which has a bouquet of tiny flowers in front and long streamers in back. The parasol matches the hat.



**AFTERNOON GOWN OF GEORGETTE CREPE**—It is biscuit colored, with redingote of dull blue crepe de chine embroidered in gold.

### America's Narrow Skirt

Last season America invented the skirt with the slight bustle and bias folds going upward from the knee to the back. It is claimed that a French designer sent to this country for twelve of these sketches and adopted the bustle in deference to American wishes.

But while the bustle is not strongly followed up in this country, the narrow draped skirt is getting a grip on the American public. One secret of its success is the fact that kindly dressmakers have shown economical women that they can turn a slightly full straight skirt into an upward draped skirt in their own sewing rooms. If you do not know this trick, try it.

Women are already convinced that flaring

skirts do not go in the picture of to-day, and yet they grow weary at the thought of ripping seams of skirts from the knees down and straightening them out. The dressmakers have gone the other way around to save themselves trouble, and the woman who wants to alter a gown at home will find that their simple trick is by far the best way to get the new silhouette. It may necessitate a longer skirt than one has been in the habit of wearing, but there is every evidence that longer skirts are getting more pronounced for street usage, and therefore it is well to be prepared for the fashion.

If a skirt that is too full is drawn upward in slight folds and caught at the end of the corset into one or more loops it will give the exact silhouette which America produced on its stage last autumn, and which American women find much to their liking to-day. This is in contradistinction to the French silhouette, and therefore one finds piquancy in the situation. At least the trick is a boon to the woman who is economical this season, either through desire or necessity.

### Altering Chemise Robes

Another piece of alteration that is given away by good dressmakers is adding to a frock a narrow plain underskirt and cutting the gown itself ten or twelve inches shorter, and letting it fall as a tunic with a girde over the new addition. This eliminates the flares in the chemise robe of yesterday and gives one the proper silhouette.

As long as it is fashionable to wear two or three materials in combination one is not called upon to match the one-time chemise gown in cloth or color when adding a separate under-

skirt over which to drop it. Black satin goes with blue serge, beige cloth or brown gabardine. It also goes with plaids and checks; and on the other hand Scotch designs in woollen and other fabrics are used for skirts. Tunics of plain material are combined with these skirts by the best dressmakers, and therefore the amateur sewing woman need not be timid in making the same combination.

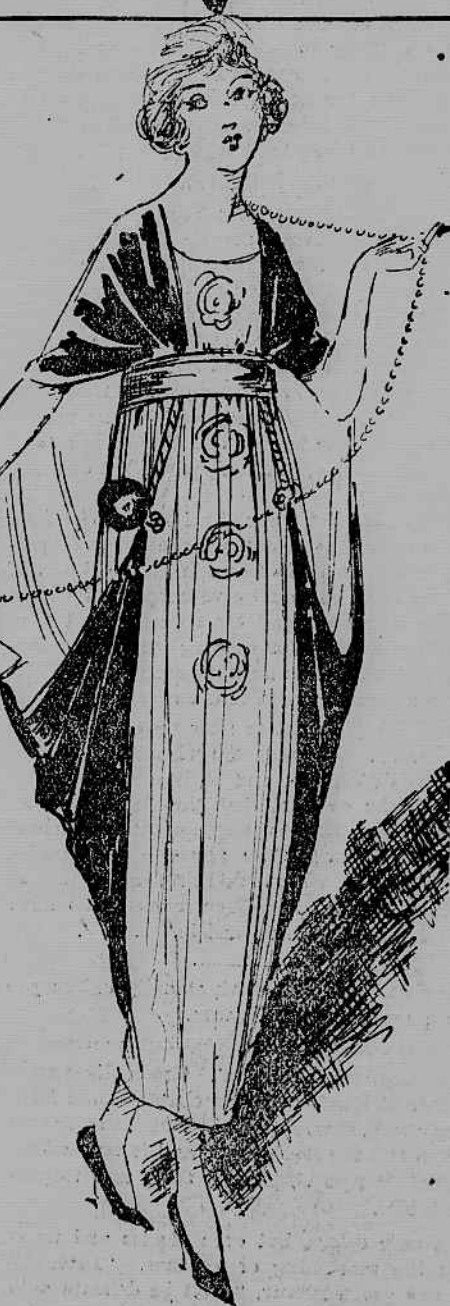
### The Insistent Round Neck

The prophets who spoke against the success of the Italian neck line should be without honor to-day. The American woman took up this difficult neck line of the Renaissance with an enthusiasm that was most unexpected. One might call it well high universal wherever fashionably dressed women are foregathered to-day. It is not only the ruling line in gowns for the street and semi-formal frocks for the evening, but it rules in separate blouses.

It is not considered fashionable any more to pull the collar of one's blouse over one's coat. Remember that. It is a small touch, but a most important one this spring. The coat may have its own collar of white pique, batiste or flannel lace, but it cannot be ornamented with a collar that is not attached to itself.

Because of this new dictum of fashion there are many women who omit revers from the neck line, so that they will not have the struggle of putting one collar over another.

There has come about a strong and ugly tendency to allow the coat collar to rest against the neck in its stark roughness, showing beneath the collarbone the round Italian neck line of the blouse. This is a fashion that should be avoided. Even the young and



**BRILLIANT HOUSE GOWN OF CHIFFON**—This one is of flesh colored chiffon embroidered in gold, with cape of coral crepe de chine. Its lower edge is caught up to the gold belt with gold cords.

beautiful cannot stand the severity of it. If the coat is of black satin, then the effect is not so harsh.

It is not necessary to keep to white at the neck line. Collars and cuffs are made of white organdies and checked gingham; but these should not be adopted for any hour except informal ones.

### Georgette Crepe a Standard Fabric For Warm Weather Gowns

The world did not disturb itself much this season in the production of new fabrics. That is well. For the duration of the war women are content to use what materials time and experience have justified.

Therefore there has been no quarrel with the weavers. The dressmakers have delighted

women in introducing a new silhouette, a varied coat line, an entirely changed neck line and a mass of minor details that stimulate the imagination; but the foundation stones of clothes, the fabrics, remain the same as they were last year.

Serge, gabardine, jersey silk and worsted, chiffon, taffeta, Georgette crepe and Chinese and Japanese silks are sold by the thousands of yards without a protest from any buyer that they are commonplace.

Among the weaves that are used for the majority of the gowns it is probable that Georgette, in its various colorings, will be accepted during the warm weather in broad fields of activity. The dressmakers, you know, are trying to make this a season of transparent apparel as the hot weather comes on—that is, they are doing a rushing business in organdies, figured voiles, fine muslins, batistes and even cotton net with ribbon ruffles.

Georgette is more durable than these fabrics because it does not need such constant cleaning, and therefore it leaps to the front in a season that calls for a revival of the old-fashioned fabrics that were once considered indigenous to the summer season.

France sent over organdy gowns as a leading fashion sufficiently early in the season to have them exploited in vast numbers at Palm Beach, and one well-known dressmaker affirms that she had an order for seventy-eight of these frocks before Easter.

These facts would seem to point out the way to a successful season for organdy, but in connection with this fabric the French dressmakers also put emphasis on Georgette, because they realized its economical value, and it is well that we should do the same.

### Combined with Other Fabrics

There are entire gowns of Georgette crepe in the new fashions, and they will be worn throughout the hottest weather for all hours of the day and evening. Dark blue serves for the street, and flesh pink, mauve and the new green shades serve for the afternoon and evening.

The sketch shows a serviceable evening gown made of Georgette crepe and crepe de chine in a combination which is thought well of by good dressmakers. This kind of gown serves the woman who wants to slip on something that will do honor to several occasions, and not be confined to a certain type of gaiety held at a certain hour.

The gown is a chemise robe, with the sides and back of dull blue crepe de chine embroidered in tarnished gold from knees to hem. The wide front panel is of biscuit-colored Georgette, with the loose girde cut in one with the fronts of the bodice, which pass under the arms and tie at the back. The sleeves are short and the neck is finished without a collar, but with a tracery of the tarnished gold.

### The Belt Necessary With the Chemise Robe

When the tunic that reached from shoulders to shoetops first came into fashion the critics were not wanting who based their disapproval on the close kinship between this robe and a morning wrapper. They felt that women were getting too negligent in their street attire. They said that the absence of waist line, the unbanded lining, the low, elastic corset and the décolleté neck line were features of clothes that should be kept for the intimacy of one's bedroom.

The one condition that fashion laid down for the wearing of the mediæval tunic on the street was that it must have a belt. This has been adhered to through the two years of the fashion's duration. It still holds good this season.

There are those who feel that the twelfth century garment has run through its first momentum and that its popularity is on the wane; but they will find that the leading French dressmakers are not of this opinion. True, there are liberties taken with the mediæval garment which might have met with great approval in the reign of Edward the Confessor, but there was not as much commercialism in clothes then as now and designers had no museums to haunt for inspiration.

### A Chemise In Serge

There is no dressmaker or shopkeeper to-day who is not fighting for a clearer vision of just what the American woman wants to buy and wear at the present critical time, and they have found that simplicity of line, together with a serviceable material, makes an appeal to every purse, be it large or small. They find that blue serge made up in a one-piece frock with an ornamental belt instead of a gypsy girde, and serving for the evening, pleases and satisfies more than many other types of gowns.

The sketch shows one that has met with unusual success. It is not to be botched by an amateur or carelessly run together by one who wants to sell it for a little more than the price of the fabric, but when well made and well adjusted, it takes to itself an air of distinction that allows little criticism. It is not even a third cousin to a wrapper.

It is of blue serge, in the new thin weave that is offered for summer; it is lined with China silk adjusted in loose lines, and it is buttoned down the front from bust to hem with deep red buttons that look like the peppermint drops that are tied up in tartan bags and put on Christmas trees. There is a ruffle of dull blue organdy down the front and a black patent leather belt with a dull red enamel buckle. The panel at each side is made of the serge and lightly tacked to the lower skirt, so that it takes away from the scanty silhouette of the foundation and gives a certain grace to the movement of the skirt.

Don't be shocked at the red buttons and blue organdy thrown on a blue serge gown that must serve for the street. It is not necessary that you have these accessories if you have passed first youth and do not spend your time at summer resorts. Blue or black buttons and white organdy are excellent substitutes for the touches of patriotic color.